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# West Germany: A More Self-Assured Role

25X1

## National Intelligence Estimate

### Key Judgments

*These Key Judgments represent the views  
of the Director of Central Intelligence  
with the advice and assistance of the  
US Intelligence Community.*

~~Secret~~

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*The following intelligence organizations participated in the preparation of these Key Judgments:*

- The Central Intelligence Agency
- The Defense Intelligence Agency
- The National Security Agency
- The Intelligence Division, Federal Bureau of Investigation
- The Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State
- The Office of Intelligence Support, Department of the Treasury

*also participating:*

- The Deputy Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Army
- The Director of Naval Intelligence, Department of the Navy
- The Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, Department of the Air Force
- The Director of Intelligence, Headquarters, Marine Corps

*The National Foreign Intelligence Board concurs.*

*The full text of this Estimate is being published separately with regular distribution.*

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## Key Judgments

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The Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) will remain the continental European mainstay of the Alliance over the five- to seven-year period of this Estimate. It will not separate itself from but will seek to maximize its influence within NATO. A large majority of West Germans will continue to support the US military presence and the Bundeswehr. But Gorbachev's policies will reinforce the marked tendency in the West German public, echoed by the current coalition, to favor enhanced detente over new defense measures to ensure security.

The next election, expected in December 1990, will be close and there is no basis for predicting its outcome. To win reelection, the Kohl-Genscher government will have to highlight continued economic growth, address the shortage of housing and the influx of immigrants, cut taxes, and more visibly advocate German interests in NATO and the EC. Chancellor Kohl may be replaced by his own party before the 1990 vote if the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) slump continues in coming local elections. Were Lothar Spaeth to succeed him and run in 1990, CDU chances would improve against the Social Democratic Party (SPD). But Spaeth's government would, if anything, be more assertive in arguing Bonn's economic and security stances.

The chances of the SPD returning to power have heightened greatly over the past six months, in coalition with either the Greens or Genscher's Free Democratic Party (FDP), or both. Such coalition possibilities would not yield all of the more extreme policies that some Social Democrats advocate. But an SPD-dominated coalition would give stronger emphasis to Eastern policy (*Ostpolitik*), to security dialogue with Warsaw Pact member states, to denuclearization, and to the eventual aims of disarmament in Europe and the dissolution of both military alliances. The SPD would support NATO membership, but it would push for a weaker transatlantic connection and seek a situation in which the two German states, often speaking and acting in parallel, would be in the forefront of a wider European effort toward East-West cooperation.

Perception of a diminished Soviet military threat will lead West Germans to demand an Alliance security policy that defers to their interest in improved East-West relations and progress in arms control. NATO efforts

to upgrade nuclear weapons or other major capabilities will encounter West German insistence that such modernizations be subject to efforts to negotiate East-West arms control outcomes that either nullify or minimize requirements for them. All conceivable German governments will strongly oppose moves that they and the public perceive place a singular burden or vulnerability on the Federal Republic.

West Germans will press the United States to respect Bonn's desire and electoral need to be the master of the German house in protecting their public and environment from the adverse effects of large Allied forces on their soil. They will assert the FRG's authority in such areas as training, basing, and force modernization requirements, especially those of the United States. Exercises and routine training will often be seen as infringements on West German sovereignty and will be restricted. Bonn is likely to call for renegotiation of the Status of Forces Agreement or major portions of it. A CDU-dominated government would be motivated in large part by the claimed need to preempt public clamoring, while an SPD-led coalition would seek more to rein in the activities themselves.

It will be more difficult for the Federal Republic to fulfill NATO expectations in maintaining an effective military defense. Unwillingness to extend the conscription period or widen the draft pool will combine with negative demographic trends, budget priorities, and a growing number of conscientious objectors to compel a reduction in the active duty forces and readiness of the Bundeswehr.

Increasingly, West Germans will insist on defining for themselves what constitutes Bonn's fulfillment of duties and responsibilities as an ally. They will want the FRG to become a force for a more self-reliant European defense effort within NATO—but without inclining the United States to disengage militarily from Europe's defense. West German leaders will have to make the case for defense more forcefully and convincingly with their own electorate if the Federal Republic's commitment to defense is to remain credible. Bonn will continue to set great value on private dialogue with Washington but will not shy away from rounding up European support for its positions in both NATO and the Western European Union. West Germans will especially resent perceived paternalism and resist public pressures by the United States or other Allies.

The Federal Republic will become an even more self-confident member of a stronger, more integrated European community. West Germans will see themselves justified by their economic and political weight in setting the tone for EC policies and parameters for further integration. As the largest EC economy in a less militarily divided Europe, the West Germans will

perceive themselves as much less dependent on and beholden to the United States than in the past. They will be less trustful and solicitous toward US leadership.

The Federal Republic will remain strongly behind completion of the goal for 1992 of a fully integrated internal EC market. Bonn will continue to support free trade and will resist efforts by France and the southern tier to erect formal trade barriers against non-EC imports. On the other hand, the West Germans will tend to shelter telecommunications, agriculture, and aerospace from international competition and will reinforce West European resistance to significantly reduce subsidies. West Germany will be reluctant to alter its economic policies in order to help reduce the US current account deficit.

Bonn's ambitious and influential diplomacy toward the East will accentuate differences with the tools and aims of US policy. The West Germans will see the framework of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) as the sacrosanct process of encouraging Eastern change and bridging the East-West division of Europe. Bonn will act in recognition that improved inner-German relations require positive East-West relations overall, with the Germanys' own division incapable of being overcome before a general European settlement of ideological, military, and economic differences.

Bonn will focus on alleviating the stresses of economic reforms in the East by calling on the United States and others to join in assisting with technology, credits, aid, and other forms of cooperation. Interest in overcoming the consequences of national and European division will continue, as the notion of the Federal Republic as a bridge between East and West grows stronger. As a result, the present attempt to forge a broader West German-Soviet economic relationship will continue as part of increasing East-West economic and political ties and efforts to promote detente. Moscow's ability to control the pace of inner-German relations and its skill in playing on West German sensitivities over nuclear weapons based on or directed at German territory give the Soviets special influence on public and elite perceptions.

Bonn's European partners, beset with a valued EC and NATO partner whose power is outdistancing their own, will look increasingly to each other—and to Washington—for assistance in dealing with a more self-assured Federal Republic.



25X1

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